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THE FIRST MUNICIPAL ELECTION IN GREATER NEW YORK.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

St. Louis Council, Legion of Honor,

DECEMBER 20, 1897,

By JAMES L. BLAIR.

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Worthy Chancellor and Gentlemen of the Legion:

Elections in the city of New York have always been of national interest. That which took place on November 2nd, 1897, was specially so for a variety of reasons. The vast interests involved, the number and character of the candidates, and the issues at stake were such as to give it a peculiar significance to all students of political questions. It is in the hope that I may be able to point out some of these special features and to draw from the incident some profitable conclusions that I have selected this subject.

GREATER NEW YORK.

Before proceeding to discuss the election itself, it may be profitable to consider something of the material and political history of the city. The city of New York prior to its enlargement occupied the whole of Manhattan Island,

covering about 28 square miles of territory. The enlarged city takes in Staten Island and other small islands in the bay, part of Queen's County and all of the city of Brooklyn, embracing in all an area of 360 square miles. In 1626 the Dutch Colonists bought the island of Manhattan for \$24. The surrounding country, now included in greater New York, was not considered worth purchasing. To-day the value of the land and buildings of the enlarged city is not less than \$4,500,000,000. The new city will have a population of 3,300,000, making it second only to London, the largest city in the world. It will have over 6,000 acres of land devoted to parks; 353 miles of water front; 1,156 miles of sewers; 531 miles of street railway; 1,002 miles of paved streets; will have in its employ 33,000 persons, an annual income of \$75,000,000 and a bonded indebtedness of \$185,000,000. The number of people, therefore, in this great metropolis, is as great as the entire population of the thirteen colonies when they declared their independence. The character of this population is the most cosmopolitan in the world, including representatives of almost every nation and city upon the earth; 1,250,000 of this number are foreign born, and the city contains more Italians than Venice; more Scotch than Leith; more English than Portsmouth; more Canadians than the Canadian city of London; more Germans than any city in Germany, except Berlin, and more Irish than Dublin.

Her street car lines represent an investment of \$95,000,000, and carry annually 480,000,000 of passengers, or an average of nearly 1,500,000 a day, which is within twelve per cent of the entire passenger traffic of the steam railroads of the nation. Her elevated roads are capitalized at \$20,000,000, and carry annually 250,000,000 persons or an average of 700,000 per day. On the steam railroads centering in the city, nearly 1,000 passenger trains leave the city every twenty-four hours, and they carry two-fifths

of the entire passenger traffic of the steam roads of the United States, and transport one-third of the total shipment by rail of the country. Over 500,000 persons enter the city every day on these roads, exclusive of 150,000 persons who daily pass between Brooklyn and Manhattan Island. Through the city pass annually two-fifths of all of the exports and two-thirds of all the imports of the nation. The aggregate of the checks and drafts which pass through the clearing house every year is 29,000,000,000 dollars or \$96,000,000 a day. The city will contain 50,000 manufacturing establishments, requiring a capital of \$1,100,000,000, employing 635,000 people and paying \$400,000,000 a year in wages. The value of their product reaches \$1,400,000,000.

These figures will give some idea of the magnitude of the great metropolis, and of the prize which was to be the reward of the great struggle in November.

THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE OLD CITY.

The political history of New York has not been different from that of most large cities. As far back as 1786 when the city had a population of but 24,000 people, contemporaneous literature shows that there existed very great maladministration of the city's affairs. It was not until 1821 that the city attained any measure of local self-government, having been up to that time controlled by a council composed of the Governor and four Senators, who appointed all local officers. But this change did not seem to mend matters, and the city offices and revenue were alternately the prey of the several political parties as the fortune of political war gave them the supremacy. In the 50's the evil became acute when the famous, or as some prefer to put it, the infamous, Fernando Wood came into power, and was three times elected Mayor of the city. Wood was

an able man, a shrewd organizer, and represented the extreme type of purely partisan politician. He was charged with being entirely unscrupulous, and with having sold offices in his gift to the highest bidder. His conduct of affairs became so intolerable that he was legislated out of office in 1857. From that time until the organization of the Tweed Ring in 1869, the city suffered much misgovernment, but all these disorders reached their greatest height during the period from 1869 to 1871, when Tweed and his associates dominated the affairs of the city. During that period of two years and eight months, the indebtedness of the city and county of New York was increased from thirty-six millions of dollars to one hundred and sixteen millions of dollars, and the greater part of this sum of eighty million dollars was squandered or stolen outright.

The investigation started by Mr. Tilden disclosed that some of the ways in which this vast stealage was covered up were as follows: The city's books were made to show that \$3,200,000 had been expended in repairing armories and drill rooms, the actual cost of which was less than \$250,000. That \$11,000,000 had been expended on an unfinished courthouse, a building for which, when completed, a fair estimate of the cost would be less than \$3,000,000. That over \$7,000,000 were expended for safes, carpets, furniture, plumbing, etc., which upon a careful examination were appraised at \$620,000; that \$460,000 had been paid for \$48,000 worth of lumber; that for printing, advertising and stationery had been paid in that short period \$7,168,000; that thousands of warrants and vouchers had been fraudulently made and that a large number of fictitious persons were on the pay-rolls of the city. This combination exercised a controlling influence on the politics of the city and its plans were laid for the capture of the presidency and the application of its methods to the conduct of the finances

of the nation. Its overthrow by the fearless and able attack of Samuel J. Tilden is one of the things for which not only the city of New York but every citizen of the United States owes him a debt of gratitude.

Following the overthrow of Tweed there was a popular uprising which elected William F. Havemeyer as Mayor on a purely non-partisan platform. The administration of Mr. Havemeyer was a most excellent one, for although he was a Democrat in national politics he was of the opinion that national issues should have nothing to do with the local government of cities, and he administered the affairs of New York accordingly, upon purely business methods. But this method did not suit the partisan politicians of either party, and at the end of Mr. Havemeyer's administration the city settled back into the old rut and, in 1874, on a square issue between a straight Republican and Democratic nominee and an unexceptional non-partisan candidate, the Tammany candidate received more votes than the other two combined. Another Tammany man was elected in 1876, and it is a notable fact that in the campaign of that year, the only candidate who came near being defeated was Richard Croker, now the leader of Tammany Hall, who was one of the nominees for Coroner, and who ran about 30,000 votes behind the party's candidate for Mayor. Then followed a line of purely partisan chief executives of the city until the evils of maladministration of the city government became so acute that by the exposures made by the famous Lexow Committee, public indignation was again aroused and in 1894 a committee of seventy was formed, the central principle of whose platform was "Municipal government should be entirely divorced from party politics and from selfish ambition or gain. The economic and business-like management of municipal affairs has nothing to do with questions of national or State politics." Upon this platform William L. Strong

was elected by a large majority. It is conceded by all (except the orators of Tammany Hall in the last campaign) that the administration of Mayor Strong has been characterized throughout by the purest of motives and that he has been guilty of no more serious error, from the standpoint of good municipal government, than that of assuming that because he had been elected by members of both parties his appointments to office should be bi-partisan, rather than non-partisan; and in attempting to carry out this idea practically by apportioning the offices to representatives of both parties, he undoubtedly made mistakes; but, judged by his latest utterances, his experience has evidently taught him the necessity of an absolute separation of party politics from municipal business, for he says: "My experience in the city hall has impressed me strongly with the fact that the conduct of a city government is purely a business matter. * * * I venture to say as the result of my observation that whenever the city departments have been used for political purposes they have been used against the public interests. The further away from politics the city officer gets in the performance of his duty, the better for him and for the people. * * *"

Facts and figures carefully collected relating to the conduct of affairs during this reform administration, as it is called in New York, show conclusively that the affairs of the city have been better, more cheaply and more honestly handled than for many years past, and it was supposed by those who believed that party politics should have no part in municipal contests, that the people of New York had learned by their varied experiences that the affairs of the city would better be treated solely as business matters. It was thought that another so-called reform candidate could easily be elected, and by the correction of such errors as were charged to the administration of Mayor Strong, the government on the purely "business principles" idea

would become a permanent thing in the city. But for various reasons, some of which we will undertake to discover, those holding these views were mistaken.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE GREATER CITY.

The charter of the new city of New York was passed by a Republican Legislature in the beginning of this year. It is a carefully prepared instrument, and many of its provisions are taken from the charter of this city. It contains some rather novel provisions, among them is one which provides a means for the testing of drugs and medicines sold by pharmacists, so as to prevent adulteration; another which provides for the issue of city bonds in very small denominations, so that they may be bought and held by persons of moderate means, and another for an art commission, one of the duties of which is to see that no public building, memorial, statuary or work of art shall be erected in any of the public places of the city without the approbation of expert and distinguished artists.

It provides for the government of the city by a Mayor and a legislative body, composed of two houses, a Council and Board of Aldermen, but the city is divided into a number of boroughs, each of which has a local government of its own, whose head is a borough president, subordinate, of course, to the central government of the whole city. The framers of this charter proceeded upon the theory of the aggregation of the component units regulated by a central government rather than the theory of unification, experience having shown, that a community of over 1,500,000 souls occupying the average amount of territory, cannot best be wholly governed from one central point without very great inconvenience, loss of time and added expense. Very great powers are lodged in the Mayor. The principal draftsman of the charter stated that he was a believer

in a "czar mayor" on the theory that undivided responsibility and great powers are the best guarantees of good administration. His term of office is four years and he has the sole appointive power of officials and heads of departments, whose salaries aggregate more than \$500,000 annually. Under these is an army of more than 30,000 employees, whose salaries reach into the millions.

It will readily be seen then that the prize was worthy of a great struggle. The power to fill more than 30,000 offices, to disburse an annual income of \$75,000,000 for four years, and to preside over a community, the second largest in the world, presents questions of grave responsibility to be sure. But Americans and particularly New Yorkers, are not accustomed to shrink from responsibilities of that sort and consequently there was no lack of candidates.

TAMMANY'S CANDIDATE.

Tammany Hall, the oldest political association in the United States, was organized in 1789. One of the principal qualifications of membership was that no person but a native born American should be eligible to hold office in the society. That qualification does not now exist. Named after a famous Indian chief, and organized into tribes, its head officer is designated as Sachem, and its nomenclature and much of the personal conduct of many of its members, especially at election times, is that of wild Indians. It was not originally designed as a partisan club. The *New York Daily Gazette*, published in the year 1789, describes the society thus: "It is founded on the true principles of patriotism and has for its motives charity and brotherly love." Of recent years that part of its charter which relates to brotherly love has been suspended in its operation so far as reformers are concerned. The society was not greatly influential in city

politics until the early 50s, but from that time to the present it has been a factor in every election. Its organization and discipline are well-nigh perfect. Its laws, written and unwritten, are observed with a fidelity and enthusiasm of the highest order, and for efficient campaign work it is doubtful if it has ever been surpassed by any political society.

Its general plan of organization is as follows: The city of New York is divided into so-called assembly districts, somewhat corresponding to our wards. Each of these districts is in the charge of a captain, who is responsible for keeping up the organization in the district, and for the casting of the vote at elections. Each district has permanent headquarters, every member of the society is registered and must report any change of residence at headquarters, and is subject at any time to perform such duties as may be required of him by his superior officers. No violation of discipline escapes unpunished; successful activity is always rewarded by promotion in the society or by public office. Treachery or failure are always chastised. As a matter of course the fundamental theory of its constitution is that the success of the party's candidate means a reward by a gift of some public office or otherwise to every member of the society who needs it, and whenever it has happened that there were not enough offices to go around, a sufficient number were always created.

The head of the society, Mr. Richard Croker, returned from foreign parts for the purpose of organizing the campaign. He selected as the candidate for Mayor, Robert A. Van Wyck, a member of long standing of the Tammany society, a judge of one of the city courts, a man of ability, good address, and against whose character no public charge has ever been made. The rest of the ticket selected by Mr. Croker was, of course, composed of persons of good standing in the Tammany society, one requisite of which

is that a man shall never have voted anything but a straight Democratic ticket. The city convention which met soon after, ratified Mr. Croker's selection of candidates, but neither at the time of their original selection, so far as the public were taken into the confidence of Mr. Croker, nor at the time of their nomination, did there seem to be any stress laid upon their special qualifications for office. It seems to have been assumed, except in the case of the nominee for the Court of Appeals, that previous experience or special fitness for the duties of the office were minor considerations.

THE REPUBLICAN NOMINEE.

Senator Platt, who has been for some years recognized as the leader of the regular Republicans in the city and State of New York, was earnestly importuned by many persons to select some Republican as nominee for Mayor, upon whom both the regulars and the independents could unite. It was conceded that as matters then stood Tammany would control a majority of votes in the greater city, and would elect its candidate unless some such coalition was formed. Senator Platt's answer was that he would prefer to see the regular nominee of the Republican party defeated than that any man of independent views in municipal matters should be elected, and Mr. Edward Lauterbach, President of the Republican County Committee said: "Better have as Mayor a true Democrat or even a Tammany man than a man responsible to no party and with no party behind him." Mr. Platt, therefore, selected, and the convention confirmed as nominee for Mayor, Gen. Benjamin F. Tracy, a lawyer of eminence, a former judge of the Court of Appeals and Secretary of the Navy of the United States and a man of spotless personal character. The remainder of the ticket was composed of men of standing in the community and in the main well

qualified for the offices, but it was not pretended either by Senator Platt or by anybody in the convention, that the selections were made on the basis of qualification only. The candidates were named because they were Republicans of the most regular and stalwart type. Each party convention adopted a platform according to custom, closely following the last national platform of the party. The Republican platform was of the usual stereotyped character, as described by Mr. Bryce, when he says it contained “a long series of resolutions, embodying the principles and programme of the party, which have usually been so drawn as to conciliate every section and avoid or treat with prudent ambiguity all questions on which opinion within the party is divided.”

The Democratic platform was of the same general character; the most notable feature about it, however, was that it omitted all mention of the free silver issue; notable, because that issue would have been quite as appropriate in the instrument as other national questions which were inserted.

In both of these platforms there was, of course, something said upon local issues, such as the rapid transit question, the liquor laws and other such matters, and, of course, all the usual promises as to honest and efficient administration of the city's affairs were made.

The two great parties thus confronted each other upon issues which were in the main purely partisan, and with candidates of the same type. If matters were allowed to take their usual course the people most interested in the outcome would have been in the position of having no choice but to vote for a strict party man upon strict party issues, with no room to choose on the ground of special fitness. The situation was that which always confronts the citizen who holds to the view that he ought to have a chance to cast his vote for candidates for municipal office selected on some

other basis than that of their attitude upon the protective tariff issue or a national policy of annexation.

THE JEFFERSONIAN DEMOCRACY.

There were certain Democrats in the city who thought that the platform of the party should have said something more than it did. That the single tax idea ought to have been touched upon as well as certain other matters, and they therefore bolted the nomination of Van Wyck, held a separate convention and placed at the head of their ticket Henry George, the well-known writer on social and economic subjects, adopting a platform admirable in many respects, containing vigorous denunciation of many evils and advocacy of many good things. The movement was designated as the Jeffersonian Democracy. The nomination was accepted by Mr. George, who made an active campaign, and would undoubtedly have polled a very heavy vote but for his untimely death just previous to the election. The vote polled by his son, who was substituted in his place at the last moment, was insignificant. The movement was inspired by Henry George himself, and the following he received was, as in the case of his former nomination, largely due to a strong conviction of his personal integrity, and his zealous advocacy of certain popular measures, both national and local.

The candidacy of Gleason was not considered and was not in fact a serious element of the contest.

CITIZENS UNION MOVEMENT.

The committee of seventy organized in 1894 and by whose efforts the election of Mayor Strong was accomplished was temporary in its nature, but upon the basis of its organization a movement was inaugurated in the early part

of the year designed to establish a permanent association for the betterment of municipal affairs. It was not originally intended that it should nominate a ticket in this election, but as the campaign progressed and the partisan lines were so closely drawn, it became evident that the time had arrived to test its value. The main principles upon which the Union was based are substantially as follows: That municipal elections should be held separately from State and national elections; that the city of New York should have local self-government; that no candidate should be eligible to municipal office unless his character and record are such as to justify public confidence in his assurance that if elected he would not use his office or permit it to be used for the benefit of any political organization; that the merit system should be impartially enforced so as to afford a fair chance to every citizen, irrespective of political influence or affiliations; that the city should retain ownership of its franchises and make grants thereof only for limited periods in order that the increases of value should accrue to the people; that all corporations using city franchises be compelled to afford adequate service at reasonable rates; that better rapid transit facilities be furnished, that the school accommodations and efficiency should be increased; that the park system should be extended, and that baths and lavatories adequate to the public needs be established; that the streets be well paved and kept clean; and that the laws relating to the sanitation of tenement houses be enforced. And in their manifesto to the public they used this language: "Without calling upon any citizen to surrender in any degree his allegiance to his party, we insist upon an entire separation of municipal government from national and State politics, and we appeal to all good citizens of whatever party to unite with us in an organized effort to accomplish the objects of this union."

The city was canvassed for members and the response

was prompt and enthusiastic. By the end of August over 25,000 persons signified their desire to become members of the Union, and after a careful canvass of the situation a nominee was selected. The basis of his selection being his personal character and his public record, which, in brief, was as follows: After an experience in business life of eighteen years at the head of a large mercantile house, he retired from business and from that time devoted himself to public life and educational work. He organized and was for some years president of the Bureau of Charities in Brooklyn. In this he had showed extraordinary powers of organization and executive ability. He had twice served as Mayor of Brooklyn with exceptional ability and had accomplished many reforms in the city's affairs. He had all his life given close attention to public affairs, had shown himself to be a man of broad views, great public spirit and a close student of the science of government. This man was Seth Low, whose name by reason of his spotless public and private record, and of his civic patriotism and unselfish devotion to the public good, afforded every guarantee of special fitness for the great office which he was asked to accept.

His name was submitted to the voters of New York, and out of a registration of about 550,000 more than 127,000 signified their desire that he should be a candidate and their intention to vote for him. Under these circumstances he accepted the nomination, absolutely unpledged to anything except the cause of good municipal government.

THE ISSUE.

By these nominations the dilemma which confronted the voter after the strict party nominations had been made, was removed. The voters of Greater New York were by these means furnished with the option of voting for one of

four candidates all of whom were personally reputable. One nominated because he was a Republican; another because he was a Democrat; another because he was a zealous advocate of the rights of man, and on that account a great popular favorite, and a fourth because by character, experience and ability he was conspicuously fitted to perform the duties of his office. No fairer opportunity could ever be furnished of ascertaining just what kind of a Mayor the voters of Greater New York desired to have.

THE CAMPAIGN.

It is said by those who have had good opportunity to observe that no campaign was ever conducted in the city of New York where there was a greater number of persons actively interested and at work. The speeches of the Republican candidates, and orators, were largely taken up in abuse of Low as a traitor to his party, and in the stereotyped denunciation of Tammany. The speeches of Mr. Low and his associates on the ticket were careful discussions of the past political history of the city, of the needs of the greater city and of the reasons why municipal government should be conducted purely upon business and not partisan principles.

The Tammany candidates and orators chiefly occupied themselves in denouncing the administration of Mayor Strong, the Raines Liquor Law, the treachery of the Republican machine and the promise of the repeal or non-enforcement of all laws which interfered with the individual liberty of the citizen.

Henry George and his followers in addition to promising a great many municipal reforms, denounced by name many of the Republican and Democratic machine politicians as criminals and promised in case of his election their prosecution and conviction. The personal elements introduced into

the campaign caused great bitterness and rancor and undoubtedly served to swell the vote.

THE RESULT.

Just on the eve of the election, the death of Henry George occurred and was most unfortunate in many ways. While it was not generally believed that he could be elected, it was known that his vote would be large, and would neutralize, if not overcome, the large number of Republicans who, it was understood, were to vote for Van Wyck, because Tracy's election was not considered possible. There is in every city election a class of voters identified with one or the other party, who are in fact indifferent to party principles, and only seek personal advantage. These persons are in the habit of trading their votes with friends of opposing candidates, when the nominee of their own party is not likely to succeed, in consideration of like favors in the past, or for future delivery. The *Tribune* and other Republican newspapers of New York had urged a coalition as the only means of defeating Tammany's candidate, and when the party managers refused to take this course, they had given but half-hearted support to Tracy.

It was conceded that George's son could not hold his father's vote, and hence there was an active scramble among the workers to secure it. The general supposition was that the bulk of it would go to Low, since his attitude in the campaign, the platform on which he stood and his personality all seemed more calculated to appeal to them than those of the other candidates. Doubtless some were influenced by the erroneous reports of George's last speech made on the night of his death, in which he was represented as saying that if he could not be elected he preferred the election of Van Wyck, and which he did not live to correct.

It is one of the unaccountable results of this election that the great majority of them went to Tammany, and if they did not cause Van Wyck's election they very largely contributed to that end.

As is well known to you the whole Tammany ticket was elected. The vote was, in round numbers, Van Wyck, 234,000; Low, 146,000; Tracy, 100,000, and Henry George, junior, 20,000. Van Wyck's plurality was 86,000. The total vote was 499,000. Total registration, 550,000. The candidate who received the third highest plurality was one of Tammany's nominees for district attorney, Gardner; by some this is accounted for by the fact that he coined and used in his speeches that unique and striking expression, "to hell with reform."

There were of course some charges of fraud and some mistakes were made by the voters owing to the somewhat complicated form of the ballot. This was not indeed to be wondered at, since Croker, "the king-maker," himself did not know how to prepare his own ballot. In the main it is conceded that the election was a fair one and fairly represented the intention of a great majority of the voters.

The comments of the parties in interest when the result was known are interesting and significant; even the silence of Gen. Tracy and Platt is not without meaning.

Henry George, Jr., said: "One thing is certain, that we have kept the faith and made the fight and we are not ashamed. Our organization will be kept up and the fight will go on."

Mr. James C. Carter, president of the Citizens Union, said: "From present indications, Mr. Low is defeated. Our high expectations are disappointed; but, though defeated, reasonable men will find much cause for gratification. It is our first deliberate effort for strictly non-partisan government. The heavy vote for Mr. Low is a triumph for that cause. The blind fealty to machine rule will yet

give way. For one, I have no thought except to continue the fight.”

Mr. Low said: “It is better to have fought and lost in such a cause than not to have fought at all. There is no need to despair of good government in the city when such a struggle could be made against such odds.”

Judge Van Wyck said: “The election is over, the polls are closed, the ballots counted, the democracy has been victorious, and I am, I learn, by popular choice the Mayor of the city of Greater New York.”

The head sachem of Tammany, Mr. Croker, said: “It is a victory of the people against hypocrisy, mendacity, personal abuse and malice. The people have registered their opinion of fake politics and fake reform by electing the entire Van Wyck ticket.”

The principal newspapers of the city, with the exception of the *Journal* had, either openly or tacitly, supported Low; even the *Tribune*, the most stalwart of Republican organs, said after the election that the Citizens Union had been vindicated.

The *Herald* said: “The campaign is over, and in the good old American way, the people will accept the result at the polls. It is of their own doing. If they have been wise in their action they will reap its rewards. If they have committed a folly they have themselves to blame and the consequent evil to bear.”

The *World* said: “The fore-ordained has happened. * * * The only hope of defeating Tammany was in complete union of all the opposition. Anti-Tammany division means Tammany’s walk-over.”

The *Journal* said: “New York is once more a Democratic city. The impregnable stronghold of Democracy in the Union.”

The *Evening Post* said in substance that the people had gotten what they wanted. An obscure country paper

tersely remarked that it was just another time when the "regulars had licked the militia." The London *Times*, which may be assumed to be impartial, said editorially: "We know what use Tammany will make of its victory. The merchants and bankers, the wise and cultivated men, the honest and philanthropic citizens will be as impotent under Croker's domination as the Italian or Hungarian patriots were under Metternich's benumbing rule; and who can deny that 'the people love to have it so?'"

THE CAUSES THAT LED TO IT.

It seems to have been generally conceded that the Democrats had a normal majority of 100,000 in the territory included in Greater New York; but it was thought that the record of Strong's administration, as compared with the extravagance and corruption of Tammany rule in the past would be sufficient to overcome this, if the popular mind had been educated to the point of understanding that because a man had always voted the Democratic ticket he was not necessarily the best qualified to solve the difficult questions of Municipal Government. But though it seems paradoxical, the record of this administration, which was probably the best, on the whole, New York had ever had, was the thing which contributed most to Tammany's triumph.

An analysis of this may prove interesting. Among the appointments made by Mayor Strong was the Superintendent of Public Works, who had an idea that when sewer and water mains were laid the work ought to be thoroughly done. Early in the administration he began repairing some sewers and was surprised to find that there was not among all the city records any map or other document showing the locations of the sewers already existing, and in order to make proper connections it became necessary for him to dig up a great number of streets and to keep them in

an impassable condition for many months, greatly inconveniencing the public and the property owners. This was used as a powerful argument against the reform administration. It was stated that the public had been made to lose millions of dollars owing to the incompetency of this official. In point of fact the public was then paying the penalty of Tammany's incompetency in the past; but it cost Low many votes. Another of Strong's appointees was a police board headed by Theodore Roosevelt, who seems to have had the idea that it was his duty to enforce all the laws and it was not in his discretion to ignore some and enforce others. Among those which he did enforce was the so-called Raines' Liquor Law, a law which greatly interfered with the convenience of those desiring to drink freely on Sundays. The law provided, among other things, that only restaurants could sell liquor on that day. In consequence thereof, every saloon was turned into a restaurant and every customer was compelled to buy a sandwich when he bought his drink. "Dummy" sandwiches were used and served to customers, and the law practically nullified but the whole thing was regarded as a great outrage and caused a reaction of feeling in favor of Tammany. The Health Department officials appointed by Strong had a law passed so that in case any tenement became unsanitary it might be destroyed upon payment to the owner of its appraised value. The necessity of a law like this in a place like New York, which contains in one part of it about an acre of ground which is the most thickly populated place on the globe, is obvious. These health officers found a great many unsanitary tenements, and, being unwise enough to think the law meant something, destroyed them. This seems to have been regarded by many voters as an outrageous invasion of private rights and the incident gave Tammany many thousands of votes.

Mayor Strong's Street Commissioner, Col. Waring, was

possessed with the notion that the streets ought really to be kept clean. He found that men, most of whose time was devoted to politics, did not make as good street cleaners as others who had the requisite physical qualifications and whose minds were not disturbed by the consideration of great political problems. He conducted the department on purely business principles; put out incompetent men; appointed good ones and kept the streets cleaner than ever before. He was also unwise enough to make an order that truck men should not leave their wagons in the street, because the streets were for the public and not for private stables and he also made a public statement on one occasion to the effect that he did not see why, because a man was a Grand Army man, he should be entitled to preference of appointment in his department. These things gave great offense, and the result was that the administration of this department caused many thousands of votes to be cast for Tammany.

Dr. Parkhurst too has his share of blame in the matter. To him was ascribed by Tammany the initiation of those hideous reforms which threatened to undermine and pervert public office from its true purpose. He was known among the followers of Tammany as "the clerical clown" and the "pulpit mountebank" and with these handles to his name it was not difficult for them to persuade many that, instead of being a zealous, honest man, who had made some foolish mistakes but accomplished a vast amount of good, he was a demon in disguise whose real purpose was to defraud the members of the Democratic party out of their just rights.

Finally the argument was made that this reform administration had not only done all of these wicked things, but had done them very expensively, had raised the rate of taxation and were oppressing the people. This argument was made plausible by the fact that the rate of taxation *was* in-

creased by this administration in order to meet necessary expenditures. Of course the mere rate of taxation is a very incomplete argument. The real question is how much public money did each administration expend, and how did it expend it. The fact seems to be that Tammany did not expend as much money in the various departments as did the reform administration, but then Tammany did not do the work, and when the reform administration took hold, the departments were without machinery, the public institutions were in a deplorable condition, and the expenditure of large sums of money was necessary to make them of any value. The whole matter was tersely summed up in a remark made in reference to the street department to the effect that Tammany only spent two million dollars per annum, where Waring spent three, but Waring cleaned the streets and Tammany didn't.

The charge that the bonded debt of the city was increased during this administration, is met by the fact that part of such increase was necessary to complete public works already planned and deemed necessary to be carried out, and the remainder was due to the fact that the Tammany administration had incurred a large floating indebtedness and purposely delayed the issue of bonds, leaving the odium of this proceeding to be borne by the Strong administration. The great growth in the city's population and its requirements, taken in conjunction with expenditures needed to repair Tammany's waste and neglect, fully account for any difference in outlay between the Strong administration and its predecessor, and there is always this to be remembered: that every dollar expended was honestly, if not in all cases judiciously, laid out for the benefit of the public.

The only reasonable criticisms against the Strong administration are, first, that the Mayor did not oppose with sufficient vigor the passage of the law providing for the creation of Greater New York; second, that in some cases certain

public works, such as the Dock Department, Harlem River Bridges, etc., would better have been delayed on the ground of economy; third, that in view of the fact that Tammany had filled the city pay-rolls with unnecessary employees, some offices might have been abolished; fourth, that the appropriations for the Board of Education might have been cut down without serious injury to the public; and, fifth, that in the matter of public charities, burdens were shifted upon the community which should have been borne by individuals.

There is very serious difference of opinion upon all these points, even now that the administration is ended and all the figures are at hand; and it would require a most minute investigation to determine the exact merits of the controversy. The better opinion is, that while there is some ground for these criticisms, they have no sound basis, except in regard to the discretion and judgment of those who had charge of the city's affairs. It is believed, even conceding that the amounts involved were as great as the opposition charged, that, on the whole, the public has not seriously suffered by reason of any of these things.

Thus it came to pass that the people in their wisdom put Tammany out of power in 1894, because they believed that Tammany was corrupt, and did not give them a good government, and in 1897 the same people put Tammany back into power, not because they believed it to be any less corrupt, but because the reform administration had simply enforced the laws the people themselves had made.

The war cry of Tammany during the whole campaign was that personal liberty should be restored. An attempt to analyze this rather vague expression discloses that personal liberty was generally understood to mean that certain laws were not to be enforced where they infringed upon the liberty of the individual, for the good of the public; which raises the query as to whether the word *liberty* ought not in

this connection to be read *license*. No less a person than ex-Governor Hoadley, of Ohio, now a resident of New York, has recently stated in the public prints that he was glad of the success of Tammany because it would put an end to the enforcement of those "inconvenient Blue Laws," dug up from somewhere by "Teddy" Roosevelt.

Some citizens of New York voted for Tammany because they knew that Tammany would not tear down their tenements which, though unsanitary, paid twenty per cent per annum. Others felt that another reform administration would put an end to getting profitable franchises from the city. Tammany has always been friendly to parties desiring franchises who are willing to pay for them and so, of course, they voted accordingly.

CONCLUSION.

As has been stated, this election affords the best test of the sentiment of this great community as to what kind of a government it desires. There were two straight-out party candidates, the candidate of sentiment, Henry George, and the candidate running on a strictly business platform. Everything was most thoroughly discussed in the newspapers, the history of the candidates and every issue raised in the platforms being published with the greatest fullness. It was scarcely possible for any one of the five hundred thousand men casting their votes to misunderstand the real issue, and while there is the encouraging fact that nearly 150,000 voters went upon record as favoring a strictly business administration, and the fact that it was a "Democratic year" which slightly increased Tammany's vote, the result is far from satisfactory from the standpoint of good municipal government.

For one thing it shows that since 1894, the number of persons who believe in strictly business principles as

applied to the administration of a city government and vote accordingly has decreased not only relatively but actually, and it also shows that while many may be in favor of good city government in the abstract, yet when it is necessary that they should make individual sacrifices of comfort and money for the public good their preference changes.

Tammany will soon be in power for four years. It will have within its grasp the revenues of a kingdom and the powers of an absolute monarch — for the people are bound with chains of their own forging; the very safeguards designed to restrain will be cunningly used to cloak the iniquities of this hideous, political devil-fish whose tentacles encompass the community. January 1st, 1898, will inaugurate a new era of plunder and corruption. The merit system in office will be broken down. Blackmailing in all its forms and of all sorts and conditions of men will be resumed. The police force will again become a hungry horde of uniformed and licensed banditti, terrorizing the law-abiding and levying unholy tribute upon the vicious. The criminal courts will administer not justice, but the decrees of Tammany Hall; public franchises will become the assets of a partisan society instead of the community; and every means known to ingenuity, daring and experience will be used to despoil the people for the enrichment of the machine. New York, the greatest municipal corporation in the republic, has given an unlimited power of attorney for the management of her affairs, irrevocable for four years, to an agency whose vocation is spoliation; which on one occasion robbed her of an amount thrice as great as the war indemnity exacted of France by Germany, and this, not through mistake, not through any unfortunate, compelling necessity, but with eyes wide open, with full knowledge of the facts, and because, forsooth, “party discipline must be maintained and party candidates supported.”

There is, it is true, a large number of persons who conscientiously believe that the government of cities by national party machinery is the true one. The argument is that as national parties are essential under our form of government, that the organization of such parties can only be maintained by means of city patronage, and that therefore such elections must be conducted on the basis of reward for partisan service and punishment for its neglect. The answer to this argument is, conceding that national parties are necessary, it does not follow that their organization depends upon local patronage. They ought to be and can be maintained upon issues based on principles of government. If they cannot be maintained upon principles only, then it seems clear that they ought not to be maintained; and even the vicious national habit in which we have indulged for nearly a hundred years past, based upon the opposite view, does not justify it.

A man very prominent as a worker for reform in New York is reported to have recently stated "I have learned one thing from this election, and that is that we must not try to reform every thing at once. The people cannot stand it in too big doses." This conclusion was emphasized by a remark made by Richard Croker, who said: "These reformers stood up so straight they fell over backwards." There is indeed much sound philosophy in both remarks.

Mr. Bryce said that our system of government as applied to great cities was distinctly a failure. With the exception of the fact that city officials are elected on a partisan basis, this conclusion is unwarranted. The systems are admirable. It is simply their maladministration which is making them more and more intolerable every year. Popular uprisings are not a remedy for this evil. The remedy is purely educational and must be along lines which will convince the majority of the people that an active interest in public affairs is the price they must pay

for the privileges which they enjoy as members of a community; if they will not pay this price they will never get good city government. It matters not whether a man's property interest is large or small except that the rich man pays the penalty in money, while the poor man pays it in bad health, discomforts and even in death. If every voter would give to the business of the city one-tenth of the time that he gives to criticism of its management, the problem would be solved; but the average American citizen has not yet reached the point where he would not rather denounce others for doing ill that which he himself ought to have done.

In every American city to-day there stands a small self-selected minority, actuated only by conscientious motives, laboring to remedy existing municipal evils. Back of them stands the great majority in each community wholly indifferent to their own interests, withholding aid and even encouragement from the devoted band which is fighting their battles, and often rewarding their services only with sneers and charges of sinister designs. Opposed are the well organized, disciplined forces of those whose vocation is plundering the community through public office. Selfishness, greed, absence of civic pride in the great majority are the constant, active allies of the opposition. Small wonder then that the devoted few are powerless.

Were these things a mystery, this anomaly might be understood, but such is not the case. There is not in the United States an intelligent man who does not, and has not for years, known the facts to be as stated here, and yet collectively men permit municipal outrages which individually they would resent as the foulest tyranny; they supinely endure treachery in public agents which they would punish with the utmost severity in the case of private ones.

It is, in brief, a political paradox, unless we regretfully

accept the theory that all government in republics being the inevitable resultant of contending social and moral forces, the municipal governments of the United States to-day are truthful exponents of the average intelligence, education and morality of the people.





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Legion of Honor Directory.

SUPREME COUNCIL,

Office, Equitable Building, St. Louis.

Supreme Chancellor, Amos F. Hoffer.

LIST OF COUNCILS.

Time and Place of Meeting—Names of Chancellors.

1. ALPHA..... Finney and Vandeventer.....2d and 4th Tuesdays.
WALTER J. WRIGHT, Chancellor.
2. IRVING.....34th and Olive Sts.....2d and 4th Tuesdays.
RICHARD HANLON, Chancellor.
3. CARONDELET.....Broadway and Haven St.....2d and 4th Fridays.
OSCAR F. DOERING, Chancellor.
4. HYDE PARK.....11th and Franklin Av.....2d and 4th Fridays.
E. M. WADSWORTH, Chancellor.
5. FRANKLIN.....13th and Chouteau Av.....2d and 4th Tuesdays.
A. SHATTINGER, Chancellor.
6. ST. LOUIS.....34th and Olive Sts.....1st and 3d Mondays.
JESSE W. EISEMAN, Chancellor.
7. UNITY.....Garrison Av. and Olive St.....2d and 4th Thursdays.
W. F. LIGTHOLDER, Chancellor.
8. KIRKWOOD.....Kirkwood, Mo.....1st and 3d Thursdays.
S. D. WEBSTER, Chancellor.
9. COMPTON HILL.....Anchor Hall.....2d and 4th Mondays.
GEO. B. TEASDALE, Chancellor.
10. IRA.....11th and Franklin Av.....2d and 4th Wednesdays.
H. T. MCSHANE, Chancellor.
11. EMPIRE.....13th and Chouteau Av.....2d and 4th Saturdays.
W. M. ABESSER, Chancellor.
12. GROVE.....Benton Station.....1st and 3d Thursdays.
LEON A. LARIMORE, Chancellor.
14. STELLA.....11th and Franklin Av.....2d and 4th Fridays.
W. S. MOORE, Chancellor.
15. BONAPARTE.....34th and Olive Sts.....2d and 4th Saturdays.
THEO. H. CULVER, Chancellor.
16. WEBSTER.....Webster Groves, Mo.....1st and 3d Thursdays.
W. H. SIMMONS, Chancellor.
17. EXCELSIOR.....3948 Easton Av.....1st and 3d Tuesdays.
CHAS. X. GAUTHIER, Chancellor.
18. IVANHOE.....3922 Olive St.....2d and 4th Thursdays.
JNO. F. GREEN, Chancellor.
19. LAFAYETTE.....18th and Shenandoah.....Every Monday.
HENRY C. DOERR, Chancellor.
21. TOWER.....20th and Bissell Sts.....1st and 3d Saturdays.
C. HOFMANN, Chancellor.
22. BENTON.....Kansas City, Mo.....1st and 3d Fridays.
C. F. SCHLEY, Chancellor.
23. BUENA VISTA.....St. Ange and Park Aves.....2nd and 4th Fridays.
L. HENNINGER, Chancellor.
24. MISSOURI.....Jefferson City, Mo.....2d and 4th Thursdays.
W. J. CHAMBLISS, Chancellor.
26. ST. JOSEPH.....St. Joseph, Mo.....2d and 4th Tuesdays.
KERR M. MITCHELL, Chancellor.
27. CARTHAGE.....Carthage, Mo.....1st and 3d Tuesdays.
ERNEST B. JACOBS, Chancellor.

